

Religious Inquirer.

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER.—ISAIAH I. 18.

EDITED BY REV RICHARD CARRIQUE.—HARTFORD, CONN. J. RUSSELL, PRINTER.

\$1 PER ANN. IN ADVANCE.] SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1822. [VOL. I.—NO. XXVI.

CIRCULAR, OF THE GENERAL CONVENTION OF UNIVERSALISTS, OF THE NEW-ENGLAND STATES, AND OTHERS, IN ANNUAL SESSION AT WARNER, N. H. September 18th and 19th, 1822.

The General Convention of Universalists, to the various Churches and Societies in its social relation, to all who wish well to the cause of Universal, impartial benevolence and grace, and especially to those who are employed, by the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, to feed the flock of God with the bread and water of life, sends affectionate salutations of fraternal love and Christian fellowship.

BRETHREN—On no former occasion has the General Convention realized, more sensibly, occasions of joy and felicitation. The Council was more numerous than usual, and the information which was obtained, from various parts of our highly favored country, was such as gave great joy of heart, comforting the brethren, and strengthening their hands. No sooner did the brethren come together and reciprocate the affectionate salutations of Christian fellowship and love, than the desirable effects of a uniting spirit were visible in every countenance, as they were sensibly felt in every heart. The greatest harmony and the warmest brotherly love prevailed throughout the whole session, directing our consultations and bringing them to most happy results, in which the entire unanimity of the body was manifest.

The public exercises were attended by numerous, crowded, and respectable assemblies, and a double portion of the spirit of grace and truth evidently possessed the hearts and lips of those who administered in holy things; and it was a most grateful sight to see the earnest and solicitous attention of congregations so numerous, to fervent prayers, supplications, intercessions, and the giving of thanks for all men, which were offered to the throne of mercy, in the sanctuary, and to the doctrine of everlasting life, which dropped like the rain, which distilled like the dew, like small rain upon the tender herb, and like showers upon the grass; while tears of gratitude, to him who loved the world and sent us salvation by Jesus Christ, copiously flowed from a thousand eyes, while as many hearts were made the lively tablets of that law of love to God and man, on which hang all the law and the prophets.—One spirit, one mind, and one heart gave life and energy to public devotion, and caused many to realize how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. To these weighty and heart-cheering considerations it is but just to add that the sobriety, decency and decorum which characterised the multitude, presented a most favorable specimen of the effects of the doctrine of that grace, which embraces the eternal interest of all the ends of the earth.

By epistolary and oral communications information was obtained, that in various parts, new societies have been recently formed, which are destitute of a competent supply of public gifts and a regular ministry. This circumstance necessarily recalls to mind the words of the blessed Redeemer, "the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." It

seems expedient that we recommend to our brethren, not to despise the day of small things, nor neglect assembling themselves together for social worship for want of experienced, public gifts. The Saviour has left us this gracious promise; "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Live coals lose their heat by being separated, but, united, they burn with increased fervor. Selected portions of the divine testimony may be read to great profit, and a few words offered in fervent prayer; when the heart is honest and sincere, will never be despised by him who knows the heart, because the petition is not framed by the scholar. Many, very many are the instances, in which a few sincere believers in the impartial grace of the Saviour, have met together in the spirit of truth, and enjoyed far sweeter comforts in their humble devotions, than are tasted in crowded congregations, where empty eloquence lulls to drowsiness a fashionable but thoughtless multitude.—These suggestions are not designed to lessen a desire for public labors, nor to dissuade the brethren from earnestly coveting the best gifts; but to incite to a due and proper improvement of all the means which a gracious Providence has furnished for the promotion of the great cause of religion, the spread of divine truth, and to sweeten the enjoyment of Christian devotion. There is, indeed, great reason for encouragement; for our prayers have been heard by the head of the church, and a goodly number of laborers have recently been sent into the Saviour's vineyard. No less than ten promising youths received letters of fellowship, to preach the glad tidings of the Saviour's kingdom, at this session of the General Convention; and they are recommended to the affections and patronage of our believing brethren at large, and to all our societies; our prayers also accompanying them, that they may be faithful and successful in the arduous, but delightful labors of the ministration of reconciliation. For our further encouragement, we may notice the happy comparison between our present standing and our situation when some of our oldest public laborers first commenced in the ministry. Then, not more than four or five individuals were engaged in the ministry of universal, impartial grace, in our country, nor were our societies more numerous; but in the short space of twenty-five years, marvellous things have astonished the observing mind. Then was the name of a Universalist an odium, and the doctrine he professed denounced as a most dangerous heresy; at this time it is the only prevailing doctrine, and is doubtless the general sentiment of enlightened Christians throughout New-England, and is fast advancing in the south and in the west, while societies are every where springing up, and public laborers are yearly multiplied. The Lord has truly and effectually said to his Zion, "lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes, break forth on the right hand and on the left."

A knowledge of what has, in past ages, taken place in the Christian world, whereby the fellowship of the church has been destroyed, its union broken, and divisions and animosities introduced, induces us, most affectionately and tenderly to caution our brethren in the ministry, to direct all their energies of soul to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. Slight variations of opinions, respecting matters of uncertain speculations were seized on by ambitious, rival bishops, who loved their own aggrandizement more than the honor of the Saviour, and made the means of divisions and parties, which in the room of following Jesus Christ, became the dupes of those whose

ambition they were devoted to maintain. The injurious consequences resulting from these divisions are recorded in history, in lines of blood, and should serve as an awful admonition to us, that we never make our speculative opinions the bond of Christian fellowship, but remember that even the *true faith*, being less than charity, should never be allowed to exclude its superior.

Brethren, dearly beloved in the Lord, let us constantly unite our fervent prayers, that the happy union in which we have so long prospered, and which has rendered our little band so formidable to the common enemy, may for ever continue, unbroken and unimpaired, and extend the savor of the name and doctrine of Jesus to the whole heritage of the Lord.

Those who have just entered the vineyard of the Redeemer, will accept our hearty welcome. Welcome, brethren, to labors of love, to crosses and to crowns.—A fervent solicitude is felt for your prosperity and usefulness, and we deem it expedient to warn you against the wiles of that enemy which sows discord among brethren. Having lived and received your religious educations in different parts of the country, and under the instructions of those who perhaps differ in some unessential opinions, you no doubt may have ideas different from each other; but all this may turn to your advantage, and to the advancement of the cause of truth, if you are cautious to let no difference of opinion operate to alienate your affections from each other. Be advised, therefore, to use every possible means to harmonize your affections, and to strengthen your union, that you may enjoy the sweets of brotherly love, and embrace each other in the bosom of that charity which is the bond of perfectness.

That our opposers, of every class, who lavish on us the accusation of holding to a doctrine which is licentious, because it embraces the whole human family in the covenant of divine grace, may have no evil thing to say against us, let us duly regard the testimony of an inspired apostle, who says, "The grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

By order, HOSEA BALLOU.

COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

Mr. Editor,

Perusing the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah, the other day, I was forcibly struck with the following passage—see, Jeremiah, v. 31.—"The prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end there-

of." The fair inference from this declaration is, that if the prophets had prophesied truly, had spoken the truth, the priests would not have been able to bear rule over the people.

This passage, it is true, has immediate reference to the prophets and priests of the house of Israel, but as the same cause ever produces the same effects, it may be applied to the Christian as well as to the Jewish church, when we discover the same rule and arbitrary domination.

The blessed Redeemer and his immediate disciples, never attempted to "bear rule," over the people.—He said; "he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." He came not to be served, but to serve. Humble in himself—he taught his disciples humility.—He could wash their feet.—When influenced by vain ambition, his apostles contended, who should be greatest when he came in his kingdom.—He said unto them, "Whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be servant of all."—St. Paul also informs the Corinthians, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake." It is evident that when the gospel was first preached, its preachers were the servants of the people—instead of judging and condemning men for not believing their testimony, they in meekness commended the word of truth, and themselves, to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

When we look in the history of the church, we find that when men began to apostatize from the truth, Priests began to bear rule, and with the errors of the Romish church we find tyranny and oppression. It is admitted by Protestants that the doctrines of the Romish Church are not according to the divine word; and her discipline is the most severe and tyrannical of any that ever existed. Her clergy have claimed unlimited controul over the faith and consciences of men, and presumed to determine the fate of individuals beyond the grave, not according to their virtues or good conduct here, but as they had yielded obedience to the will of the clergy, or had liberally given to enrich the church. This power and rule was not obtained at once. By slow degrees, as men became enslaved by error and falsehood, and as prejudice and superstition took hold of the mind, they became the dupes and victims of the cunning and designing, who, taking advantage of their spiritual calling, set themselves up as the judges in all matters of religion, and thus usurped an ecclesiastical authority over the minds, and opinions of men.

Having then the evidence, that the Christian church has fallen into the same state as did the house of Israel, the cause which has produced the similarity of circumstance is the same. The prophets or teachers of the church, have prophesied or taught falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means. Without tracing the revolutions which have taken place in the Christian world since the

reformation, it will appear obvious from the experience and observation of most people at the present day, that the priests or clergy of New England, especially of Connecticut, have borne rule over the people, and their rod has been a rod of IRON. This despotism is not extinct. It exists at the present day—and shews itself in that bitterness which is exhibited toward those who differ from them in sentiment, and the measures which they adopt to prevent people from hearing any doctrine preached but their own. How oft do these priests show their power, in obtaining votes in church meetings—or in forming articles of discipline, which prohibit an exercise of the rights of conscience—or at least, prevent people from exercising the liberty of hearing for themselves?

From whence is this authority to rule derived? From whence does it come? It is not found in the example of Christ, nor his apostles. It is not from any authority given in the Scriptures.—It forms no part of the gospel ministry. Religious slavery is not consistent with the gospel of Christ. It is said, the “Truth shall make you free,” and we are exhorted to “stand fast in the LIBERTY wherewith Christ has made us free.” It is error and falsehood that enslave the mind, and enable the priest to bear rule.

As, therefore, we are interested in distinguishing the true prophet from the false—the preacher of Gospel truth, from him who preaches the doctrines of men—if the prophet Jeremiah is correct, we can not be at a loss to determine for ourselves on this important point. When we find a man or any body of men, in the character of clergymen, bearing rule over the people, making merchandise of them, and claiming not only the direction of their faith, the keeping of their consciences, but also, the distribution of their property—we may rest assured it is because the prophets prophecy falsely, that the priest is able thus to bear rule.

The false prophet ever seeks his own aggrandizement, honor, and glory, more than that of his Redeemer, or the happiness of mankind. He, therefore, prophecies falsely, because falsehood keeps the mind in the bondage of continual uncertainty, and consequent fear, from which truth would deliver them; and delivering it from the uncertainty of the future, would liberate it also from clerical rule, and unjust usurpation. Every man, who has a just conception of religious institutions, and the benefits derived from the same, will ever be willing to pay due respect to his spiritual instructor, that he may strengthen his hands in the important work before him; this respect will be according to his usefulness as a servant of Christ—and while the minister brings with him the divine consolations and hope of eternal life, he will be endeared to us, as a brother and true friend. It is for him, however, to take care not to infringe upon our just rights and privileges, nor

to lord it over us. This he assuredly will not do while he follows Christ—nor can he do it, while he preaches the truth. It is only when the prophets prophecy falsely, that the priests bear rule.

TIMOTHY.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

Of the explication of the Scriptures.

(No. 15. Concluded from page 197.)

We proposed in our last, to make some observations in support of the position, that there was no system of faith, worship, or ordinances whatsoever contained in the Scriptures, and that this forms no part of the gospel. It is apparent that this is a negative position, and consequently not susceptible, strictly speaking, of demonstration, as a negative cannot be said to be proved; neither ordinarily is proof required. In this as in other cases, all that can be done in proof of the negative, is to show that there is no testimony in support of the affirmative of the proposition. It is for those who maintain that the Scriptures contain a system of faith, worship, and ordinances, to produce their testimony in support of this proposition. We can with great confidence call on them to produce their testimony. The same evidence which is to prove that the Scriptures contain a system of faith, &c. must prove what that system is. It is evident that this testimony cannot be very explicit and satisfactory, as no two sects agree concerning the system which they suppose is contained in the Scriptures. According to Calvin and his followers, the testimonies of Scripture prove that system of doctrine denominated Calvinism; according to others, they prove Arminianism; and according to Priestly and others, they prove the more rational system of faith embraced by Unitarians. These three systems of faith are essentially and fundamentally different; yet they are all supported by the same testimony, and the partisans of each maintain that their doctrines constitute the true system of faith contained in Scripture. It is evident, therefore, that no system of faith or dogmas, is *clearly and explicitly* revealed in the Scriptures, for if so, men could not differ so widely concerning it. Will it be contended that a system of faith is communicated, but that it is so abstruse, or the testimony concerning it so obscure that we cannot well determine what it is? We have attempted to demonstrate, that what is not intelligibly communicated, is not communicated at all, and that it is an impeachment of the divine character to consider the Scriptures as obscure and unintelligible.

If a system of faith was essential to Christianity, and a belief in this system was the means by which mankind were to be saved, would not that system have been communicated in plain and explicit terms, and its features clearly defined? To maintain the contrary, would be to suppose, either that the Deity could not do this, or that he neglected to

do it, for the purpose of deceiving and entrapping his creatures. Has a good and just God made the salvation of his creatures depend upon their belief of what has not been *intelligibly* communicated, and what they are not capable of understanding? No man will maintain this. All will admit that if a system of faith is communicated, the belief of which is essential to salvation, it must have been communicated in an intelligible manner, and in express and distinct terms. But will any one contend that there is any system of faith in express terms, contained in the Scriptures? Do they contain any creed or articles of belief? If so, what are they, and where are they to be found? Are they the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England—the Augsburg Confession of Faith—the Articles of the Council of Dort—the Westminster Catechism—or the Saybrook Platform? It would be nearly as difficult to find either of these systems of dogmas in the Scriptures, communicated in express and distinct terms, as it would the dogmas of the Hindoos. The very fact of Synods, Councils, and Assemblies of divines, forming Creeds, Articles of Faith, Systems of Theology, and Forms of Worship, is entirely inconsistent with the idea that any such system, or forms are contained in the Scriptures.

If there were creeds, articles of faith, and systems of divinity contained in the New-Testament, there would have been no work for synods, councils, assemblies of divines, &c. and the dogmas of religion would rest upon higher authority than ecclesiastical councils, or any other creed-makers—they would rest upon *divine authority*, if they formed a part of Christianity, and a belief in them was necessary to salvation.

Where are the dogmas of school divinity to be found in the Scriptures? Is it in the doctrines taught by Christ or those taught by the apostles? The latter did not intend to teach any new doctrines; they were only followers of Jesus, and the servant cannot be greater than his master. They attempted to communicate and explain the doctrines of Christ—not to proclaim their own. If there is any system of faith which is essential to the gospel, it must have been communicated by Christ. He taught an excellent system of morals, but none of faith. He taught, that love was the fulfilling of the law; and that to love God, and our fellow creatures, was all that it required of us; all that reason or revelation demands. He stripped religion and morality of their forms, and taught them in spirit and in truth, and with the greatest simplicity.

So far as any doctrine can be supported by authority, we could establish what we have said by many *great names*; not, to be sure, professed theologians; but such names as Locke, and Sir Isaac Newton. Mr. Locke, in his Reasonableness of Christianity, says, "that above three score years after our Saviour's passion, St. John knew nothing else required to be believed, for the at-

tainment of life, but, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God." "To this, (he adds) it is likely it will be objected by some, that to believe only, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, is an historical, and not a justifying or saving faith. To which I answer, that I allow to the makers of systems, and their followers, to invent and use what distinctions they please, and to call things by what names they think fit. But I cannot allow to them, or to any man, an authority to *make a religion* for me, or to *alter that* which God hath revealed. And if they please to call the believing that which our Saviour and his apostles preached, and proposed alone to be believed, an historical faith, they have their liberty; but they must have a care how they deny it to be a justifying or saving faith, when our Saviour and his apostles have declared it so to be, and *taught no other*, which men should receive, and whereby they should be made believers unto eternal life; unless they can so far make bold with our Saviour for the sake of their beloved systems as to say, that he *forgot what he came into the world for*, and that he and his apostles did not instruct people right, in the way and mysteries of salvation."

Such were the sentiments of this great and good man, expressed in a manner peculiarly clear and forcible. He expressly declares that Christ and his apostles taught no other belief, than that Jesus was the Messiah, and that those who contend for the belief in systems of faith, make bold with the Saviour, and charge him with having forgot what he came into the world for.

But we must dismiss this subject, as we have not intended to extend these numbers into the next volume, and consequently this must be the last, as the present number completes the first volume. Our subject has been extended to a much greater length than we expected, and it is not yet entirely disposed of, as there are two heads of the last division of the subject, which we have not noticed. It will be recollected that we proposed, first, to consider the means which have existed, and do now exist, for the exposition of the Scriptures, and the instruction of the people therein; secondly, to examine whether there was any necessity of such extraordinary means; and, thirdly, to consider what have been their consequences. We disposed of the first division of the subject, by briefly noticing the immense number, learning and influence of the clergy, in every Christian country; the institutions of learning of a theological nature, or under the influence of the clergy, and the immense mass of books and publications of every description, of all which the Scriptures form the basis. The second division of the subject lead to an examination of revelation so far as was necessary to decide whether it is so obscure or mysterious, as to require such extensive means to explain and enforce it; and here we have attempted to show, that divine revelation cannot be unintelligible; that to maintain it is

so, is little short of a contradiction in terms ; and likewise endeavored to explain the causes and sources, from whence, the apparent obscurity and mystery that hangs over Christianity, originated. In the last division of our subject, we proposed to examine the consequences of the extraordinary means noticed in the first, as respects Christianity, society, and the clergy. The first head we have examined at length, and boldly maintained that the clergy, and their dark and mysterious learning have been the principal, if not the sole cause of the perversion and corruption of Christianity ; that by their having ingrafted their systems of theology, and school divinity into the Scriptures, they have virtually created a new religion, having in none of its features only a remote resemblance to Christianity. The second part of the last branch of the subject was incidentally touched upon in treating of the first, and as it is a topic with which most individuals are familiar, we have no wish to dwell upon it ; but the last part we should like to examine, would our limits admit. As it is, however, we can only make a few general remarks.

The corruption of the Christian religion, or in other words, the establishment of abstruse, artificial, dark and mysterious systems of metaphysical theology, retaining only the name of Christianity, has been the principal cause of the *power, influence, and wealth* of the clergy. It is apparent, that a simple religion which teaches mankind to reverence God, and love one another ; without dogmas of faith, without forms of worship, would afford but a meagre field for the clergy. The priesthood of such a religion would have little to do ; there would be no field for their learning ; no occasion for their industry ; and least of all, any opportunity to assume the character of interpreters of the divine will, and to claim an insight into spiritual things, of which the rest of mankind are ignorant. As they would perform no mysterious rites, no religious offices essential to the salvation or happiness of mankind, their services could not be very important, or very highly appreciated. They would be only moral and religious teachers, designed to remind and admonish their fellow creatures of their duty to God and one another, as disclosed by reason and revelation. Instead of spiritual guides, they would be patterns of morality ; instead of teaching men what to believe, they would teach them how to act ; and their lives being devoted to study and reflection, they would be distinguished from other men only by the regularity of their lives, by being more moral and benevolent, and less under the influence of selfish and violent passions. Such a clergy would be of incalculable value ; but they can only exist where there is such a religion.

In the same ratio as systems of theology differ from the simplicity of Christianity, do the clergy of different countries differ from those here described. The more dark, mysterious, and incomprehensible religion is rendered ; the more it is

confused and perplexed with dogmas, and burdened with rites and forms, the more importance is attached to the *services* of its clergy, and the more extensive is their influence and power.

This is demonstrable by reason, and is fully confirmed and established by history. Of every incomprehensible and mysterious religion, the clergy alone are its interpreters ; and they make it what they please. Their deluded followers are soon led to regard them as oracles, having an insight into spiritual things, and as possessing great influence with heaven, so that they consider their future happiness or misery as depending upon the will of their priests. Where the clergy establish absolute authority upon religious subjects, they gradually extend their influence to others, until they establish a tyranny of all others the most oppressive—being a dominion over the mind and conscience, founded upon superstition and bigotry. This has been done by the Bramins in India, and by the clergy of Spain, Portugal, and other Roman Catholic countries. Every other kind of tyranny sinks into insignificance, when compared to that of an hierarchy ; it is cruel, intolerent, relentless ; arrogant, capricious, dogmatical. Accustomed to implicit obedience, it cannot brook the least opposition ; instead of reason and argument, it resorts to fire and faggot, the rack, and the inquisition, to silence its opposers and maintain its authority. It takes cognizance not only of acts, but of words, of opinions, and even of thoughts, and punishes them as damning sins.

Where the clergy have the greatest power, we need scarcely say, that they are the most wealthy, as power always commands wealth ; and the licentiousness and indulgence of the clergy, have always been in a corresponding ratio with their power and wealth. And instead of instructing and enlightening the people in proportion to their means, they have always been found the most ignorant where the power and influence of the clergy are greatest. Without pursuing this inquiry farther, it is apparent that the clergy have not wanted a *motive*, to stimulate their zeal in establishing and defending their artificial and abstruse systems of theology, as they have been the source of all their undue power, influence, and wealth, and of the dreadful train of evils which have flown from them, and so deeply afflicted the human race.

TRENCHARD.

Cassel, June 25.—An event equally extraordinary and melancholy took place lately at Wabern, three leagues from hence. A Protestant minister shot himself through the head in the pulpit, at the moment when he was about to commence his sermon. The unfortunate man had for some time involved himself in an excess of mysticism, which probably deranged his mind.

Boston Centinel.

Religious Inquirer.

HARTFORD, SATURDAY OCTOBER 26, 1822.

This Number closes the First Volume of the "*Religious Inquirer*."—Our readers are undoubtedly well acquainted with the designs of this publication—that although we meant to advocate the doctrine of God's universal benevolence and good will to men, we designed to make the *Inquirer* the repository of free inquiry. This was stated in the Prospectus. We selected as our motto, the invitation God was pleased to give by his prophet. "Come now, and let us reason together." And our columns have ever been open to any communications embracing religious sentiments, however they might differ from ours. While, on the one hand, we have no truth that we are unwilling to communicate; so on the other hand, we have no errors that we are not willing to have exposed. We are persuaded we shall suffer no loss by having our errors displayed to the world, nor are any more interested in being saved from falsehood than ourselves.

Although we have invited a free and friendly discussion on those points in which we differ from our brethren of other denominations, yet they, except in two or three instances, have studiously avoided all discussion. In our second number we called upon the North Consociation of Hartford County, to prove the correctness of the statement made by their Committee, who penned the Report concerning the state of religion within the bounds of that Consociation, and who stated that "UNIVERSALISM WAS A FATAL DELUSION." We had reason to believe, that a due regard to their characters as Christians, and as ministers of Christ, would have induced them, either to retract an assertion injurious to the feelings of those who candidly and seriously believe in that doctrine, or to have come forward with the Scripture evidence which justified them in the belief that "Universalism is a fatal delusion!" To make these broad assertions, without assigning any reason, or demonstrating the fact by argument, is inconsistent with that divine rule which requires that we should do unto others as we would that others should do unto us. The members of this Consociation would have felt themselves injured, had we made such charges without attempting to prove the fact. It is due to every sincere professor of religion, that those who attempt to destroy his faith and hope, should so far respect his feelings, as to show that their motives are good, by laying before him the best and strongest arguments in their possession, for disproving his sentiment, and speaking against it.—This these gentlemen have refused to do, although called upon in a public manner.

Were we to inquire into the cause of this silence, we should still be at a loss for a reasonable

answer, or at least, such a one as our opponents would be willing to acknowledge. There are but two reasons which can be given. First—They must consider the doctrine of universal benevolence, or its advocates and believers, unworthy of notice. Or, Secondly—They do not feel themselves able to contend against the doctrine, with any probable success. On the first reason, we observe—If the doctrine be true, it is worthy the notice of all rational and intelligent beings, as it embraces the hope of eternal life, and contains in itself, all that can give patience and resignation to the sick, support to the dying, consolation to the mourner, and divine enjoyment and encouragement to the reflecting mind. It teaches the benevolence and love of God to men. It enables us to look unto God as the Father of our spirits; and in him to behold all those parental affections which seek the welfare and happiness of the object of love. It enables us to adopt the language of the prophet. "God is my salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid." It produces love in the heart, and an humble confidence in the God of our salvation. "We love him because he first loved us." It teaches us to love one another, as children of one common parent. "Have we not all one Father—hath not one God created us,"—and we are forbidden on account of this consanguinity to deal treacherously every man with his brother. If then, these are the effects produced by a belief in the doctrine of Universal Salvation, it is surely worthy of notice.

But the opposers of this doctrine, consider the joys and consolations which Universalism affords, as transient and momentary; that whatever support or enjoyment it may afford us in time of health and prosperity, yet, like a false friend, it will leave us, when we most need consolation, in time of sickness, and on the bed of death. To use their own expression, "it will do to live by, but not to die by." And that the belief, if persisted in will land us in a state of eternal never-ending suffering. That it is a delusion of the devil to entrap souls, and lead them down to endless perdition. Now will the opposers of Universalism say, it is a doctrine unworthy their notice. They must know, that this doctrine is spreading far and wide, and the prospect is, that it will soon become the most prevailing. If then it has such a dangerous tendency, if it is such a pernicious falsehood, can it be so unworthy their notice, that they will suffer it to spread through the country, without attempting to stop its progress? It is very evident that the doctrine is not unworthy of labored discussion in the pulpit, when none can have the privilege of pointing out the gross misrepresentations that are frequently made, nor of replying to the arguments used to refute it; yet when a free and friendly discussion is invited, the doctrine becomes at once unworthy of notice.

Clergymen are fond of considering themselves

as watchmen, set on the walls of the spiritual Jerusalem, to warn sinners of their danger. They talk much of clearing their garments of sinner's blood; and that unless they do this, the blood of sinners will be required at their hands. If then, they have this solemn charge of souls, will they say, that souls are unworthy their notice? Is a man unworthy of notice, because he believes that the Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works—and his soul unworthy of an attempt to save it? It is said, by way of excuse, we wish to live in peace—to avoid all altercation and dispute—to let every man think for himself—but these Universalists are seeking to make difficulty, and to drive people into argument with them. This may pass for an excuse among those who are not in the habit of examining for themselves; but to the reflecting, this excuse is as weak as it is inconsistent with the daily practice of those who make it. It is certain, that those who say, they avoid discussion, from the desire to live in peace, are continually violating the tranquility of society, by their sarcasms and bitter invectives against the doctrine, they treat with cold contempt and disrespect, those who embrace it; and no regard is paid to the feelings of Universalists; nor is any willingness manifested that they should think for themselves.

Was their love of peace carried into the pulpit, and was it manifested in the general deportment, of those who decline a friendly discussion, we should be more inclined to believe them sincere in their excuse, but while those who are teachers of the people, both in the desk, and out of it, abuse those who believe in God's unlimited goodness; and professors of religion show a vindictive and persecuting spirit, we cannot believe they possess much of the spirit of peace and love. A discussion, conducted with the feelings of a Christian, can never disturb the peace of any one; we have no desire to enter into angry disputes; nor should communications written in an improper and unchristian spirit, disgrace our columns.—The ends we aim at, are the dissemination of the TRUTH—the LIBERATION of the human mind from the thralldom of superstition, bigotry, and persecution, and the consequent happiness of mankind.

Knowing ourselves to be fallible and liable to err, we solicited a friendly discussion, not for the sake of embroiling community in difficulty, nor to disturb the peace of society by our disputations; but, to afford an opportunity to the friends of truth, and the lovers of happiness and peace, to point out our errors, and to show us wherein we judged or believed incorrectly, on these momentous concerns. This could be done in the bonds of charity and brotherly love. This has not been done—and as the neglect is not justified by the first reason given, viz. that the doctrine, or those who believe it, are not worthy of notice—we turn to the 2d and only alternative, viz, that the opposers of the doctrine do not feel themselves able to contend

against it with any probable success. On this, we have nothing to say—we leave it for our readers to draw the conclusion for themselves.

We return thanks to our correspondents who have favored us with communications, and shall be happy to receive a continuance of their labors in the cause of truth and righteousness—that error and those fatal delusions, that have deluged the world in wretchedness and misery, may be done away—that blind fanaticism, the scourge of the human race, may be driven from the earth—that the pure principles of love, justice, mercy, and truth, may reign in every heart, and true religion be exhibited in charity and divine benevolence, that every man may love his neighbor as himself, and rejoice in the salvation of all men.

In behalf of an afflicted family, suffering under that dispensation of God, which has removed from this world an aged father and grand-parent, who was by them beloved and respected; and who feel injured by those base and false stories which are continually circulated, we once more call the attention of our readers to the circumstances relative to the death of Mr. Timothy Holton, of Ellington.

Were these stories confined to the common and idle conversation of those in private life, who are fond of the marvellous, and can find nothing better to converse upon, we should not have troubled ourselves again to notice them; nor would the family feel injured as they now do. But when ministers of the gospel make it a point to relate these things in the pulpit, and that, too, after our solemn declaration, that Mr. Holton never gave the invitation, was entirely unknown to us, &c.; and when the story was acknowledged to be false, by every candid man in Ellington, and by Mr. Brockway himself, it becomes necessary once more to notice this subject, to show the public how much regard some men have for the truth, though appearing in the sacred character of ministers of Christ, and who are very ready to talk about the demoralizing tendency of Universalism.

We are informed by a correspondent, who had his information from two gentlemen of respectability, that were present—that a Mr. Calhoun, a Presbyterian clergyman, preaching in Bolton, on the Sabbath, at the close of his services, told the people he had a remarkable circumstance to relate to them, which was as follows:—That a Mr. T. Holton, of Ellington, who had for some years been a Universalist, went to Hartford, to invite a Mr. Carrique, an Universalist preacher, to come to Ellington, and put a stop to the revival there going on. On his return, Mr. H. went to Esquire Hall, and asked leave for Mr. C. to preach in the Meeting-House—that Esq. Hall replied, You had better go home, Mr. H. and cry to God for mercy, before it is too late, or mercy is yet to be found. That Mr. H. said, He never would cry to God for mercy.—But mark the judgment of God, said

this preacher. Mr. H. on his return home was suddenly taken sick, and he who said, he would not ask for mercy, is now in a wretched state of mind, calling for mercy.—That he sent for Mr. Brockway, a Calvinistic minister, to come and pray with him; notwithstanding his own favorite minister was in town. And that just as Mr. C. commenced his services, Mr. H. died, having renounced his belief in Universal Salvation.

We are often told by these clergymen, that we shall have to give an account in the day of judgment, for every thought, word, and action, of our lives.—Is it possible they believe this themselves, and yet be the propagators of reports, which they must know are false? Or, are they a privileged class, against whom nothing will be laid up, let them say and do what they will? But if this is the case, they ought to have some concern for the influence of *evil example*. Others may feel justified in prevarication and deceit, and taking advantage of the example of their ministers, plunge into all vice.

Excepting, that there was a Mr. T. Holton, who lived in Ellington, and died there, we say, the whole story is a falsehood, a sheer fabrication, and told to frighten the weak and ignorant. And should any one, after this, have any doubt as to this matter, they are referred to the family of Mr. H. and to every man of respectability and TRUTH in the town of Ellington.

To those clergymen, and all others, who are so fond of propagating such stories, we say, go on, gentlemen, and seal your own destruction—but be assured, that the day of RETRIBUTION is not far distant. The cause of truth and piety cannot be promoted by *falsehood*; it is only error and imposition which requires such support.

NEW MEETING HOUSE.

The corner stone of the new Universalist Meeting-House erecting in Bulfinch-Street, in this city, was laid with due ceremonies, on Monday afternoon, the 7th inst. The services were introduced by an appropriate prayer by Br. Jones, of Gloucester; a silver plate was then deposited by the President of the Building Committee. (the Hon. Benjamin Russell); the stone was then laid by the Architect, and examined and pronounced to be well fitted, by Br. Dean, after which he addressed the Throne of Grace, in prayer: which was followed by an Address, by Br. Turner, of Charlestown.

The ceremony throughout was impressive, and was witnessed by a large number of citizens.

The following is the principal inscription on the plate deposited under the stone:—

"He that built and sustains all things is Jehovah—This House, devoted to the worship of Almighty God, and to the promulgation of his Great Salvation through Jesus Christ, the Chief Corner Stone, was commenced, and this Stone laid, October 7th, in the year of our Lord, MDCCCXXII. of the Independence of the United States the 46th, and of the Institution of the City of Boston, the first."

Bost. Univer. Mag.

ANOTHER MEETING-HOUSE.

The corner stone of the Second Universalists Church, in the Northern Liberties of the City of Philadelphia, has been laid, in Masonic order. The prayers and addresses on the occasion, by the Rev. Abner Kneeland, Pastor of the First Universalist's Church in that City.

FROM THE GOSPEL HERALD.

DREADFUL SCOURGE.

It appears from the following, that Ireland is burdened with a swarm of clerical locusts, worse than that which visited Egypt.

Late accounts state, "There are in Ireland,

8 Archbishops,
18 Bishops,
300 other Dignitaries.

And 1200 British clergymen of the Church of England." In this distressed country, (devoured by clerical locusts,) "the tythes alone amount to three million four hundred thousand dollars, equal to about one-third of the whole peace establishment of the United States." No wonder that starvation should be the consequence of this order of things. It is passing strange, that men pretending to great holiness should extort, on penalty of eternal damnation, enormous sums from the people. But it is yet more strange that the people should be gulled by them, and submit to fatten these religious gormandizers at an expense of thousands and millions of dollars, and find themselves brought to starvation, for their trouble. But all this is "for the love of God, and poor souls."

THE BLIND RECEIVING THEIR SIGHT.

Our Br. Bigelow writes from Palmyra, (Ohio,) that they had in their Association, which lately convened, *seventy* members, who a short time since were *Methodist class-leaders*! Our Br. Bigelow adds, "Eight years ago I was alone in this state, and now, within our two associations, there are more than *three thousand* members, and about the same number south of us! We gave a letter of fellowship to a neighbour of mine, who three months since was a *Methodist exhorter*. We have two of their preachers besides, who for a long time were elders in their church, and many of their members have joined us. We are not disposed to exult in a boasting manner, but if they were to obtain so much as one son or daughter of a Universalist, they would proclaim it far and wide!!

Ibid.

The following, is the conclusion of the last will of Benjamin Franklin, as drawn up by him, in 1757. It is expressive of his gratitude for the divine goodness, and exhibits a truer spirit of piety, than is manifested by those who have attempted to stigmatize his character, by charging him with Infidelity, Deism, &c.—EDITOR.

"And now humbly returning thanks to God for producing me into being, and conducting me hitherto through life so happily, so free from sickness, pain, and trouble, and with such a competency of this world's goods as might make a reasonable mind easy; that he was pleased to give me such a mind, with moderate passions, or so much of his gracious assistance in governing them, and to free it from ambition, avarice, and superstition, common causes of much uneasiness to men; that he gave me so long to live in a land of liberty, with a people that I love, and raised me, though a stranger, so many friends among them; bestowing on me, moreover, a loving and prudent wife, and dutiful children; for these, and all his other innumerable mercies and favors, I bless that Being of Beings, who does not disdain to care for the meanest of his creatures. And I reflect on those benefits received with the greater satisfaction, as they give me such a confidence in his goodness as will, I hope, enable me always, in all things to submit freely to his will, and to resign my spirit cheerfully into his hands, whenever he shall please to call for it; reposing myself securely in the lap of God and nature, as a child in the arms of an affectionate parent.

"B. FRANKLIN."

DIED.

At Gibsonsport, Mississippi, John, and D. H. Warren. D. H. died on the 4th of June last, aged 19; and John on the 8th, aged 23 years.

Also, on the 1st of August last, at Belpre, Ohio, Erastus Warren, aged 17 years.—These three young men were brothers, and formerly of Dudley, Mass.

